

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00
NSCE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01
HA-05 /092 W

-----025922 051307Z /47

O R 051227Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7875

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2543

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: MAY 5, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 2502 (DTG 031415Z MAY 78)

1. SUMMARY. FATAH REPORTEDLY ARRESTED PEOPLE INVOLVED
IN ATTACKS ON FRENCH SOLDIERS IN THE TYRE AREA, AND THE
NEW COMMANDER OF THE FRENCH CONTINGENT ARRIVED IN LEBANON.

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FATAH CALLED ON ARAB STATES TO RE-EVALUATE THEIR RELATIONS
WITH THE U.S. UNRWA ANNOUNCED IT WOULD MOVE ITS
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FROM LEBANON. THE ARAB DETERRENT
FORCE BROKE UP A DEMONSTRATION OF GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES IN BEIRUT. PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE AL-HOSS
HAS STILL NOT FORMED A CABINET. END SUMMARY.

2. REPORTED PLO CRACKDOWN.

ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, FATAH ON MAY 4 MADE A NUMBER OF ARRESTS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE MAY 2 ATTACKS ON FRENCH SOLDIERS IN THE TYRE AREA. THE PRESS IDENTIFIED THE GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACKS AS "THE POPULAR RESISTANCE FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE SOUTH FROM OCCUPATION AND FASCISM," A NOMINAL ENTITY WHICH OTHER SOURCES INDICATE SERVES AS A COVER FOR THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE AND ITS LEBANESE AFFILIATES.

3. UNIFIL NEW FRENCH COMMANDER ARRIVES.

LT. COLONEL DOMINIQUE VIARD ARRIVED IN LEBANON MAY 5 TO REPLACE COLONEL JEAN JALVAN AS COMMANDER OF THE FRENCH CONTINGENT. SALVAN, WHO WAS BADLY WOUNDED ON MAY 2, IS NOW IN A HOSPITAL IN BEIRUT. MORALE OF UNIFIL, ESPECIALLY OF THE HEADQUARTERS AND THE FRENCH CONTINGENT, IS LOW IN WAKE OF CASUALTIES RESULTING FROM CLASHES WITH PALESTINIANS AND APPARENTLY INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT UNIFIL'S ASSIGNED MISSION.

4. FATAH CALLS FOR RE-EVALUATION OF RELATIONS WITH U.S.

ON MAY 3 FATAH CENTRAL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED THAT
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IN RECENT MEETINGS IT HAD EXAMINED "THE DECLARATIONS OF U.S. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, THE ARAB SITUATION AND THE REPERCUSSIONS OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES." AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SAID IT WAS "CALLING UPON ALL ARAB STATES TO RE-EXAMINE ARAB-US RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF THE USA'S AGGRESSIVE POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PEOPLES OF PALESTINE, THEIR NATIONAL CAUSE, AND THE ARAB NATION."

5. UNRWA TO MOVE HEADQUARTERS FROM LEBANON.

UNRWA ANNOUNCED ON MAY 3 THAT IT HAD DECIDED TO MOVE ITS REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FROM BEIRUT "IN THE INTERESTS OF GREATER EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY OF STAFF." UNRWA ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS CONSIDERING RELOCATING THE HEADQUARTERS TO DAMASCUS, AMMAN OR VIENNA. (UNRWA'S OFFICE FOR LEBANON WILL REMAIN IN BEIRUT.) ISLAMIC COUNCIL PRESIDENT SHAFIQ WAZZAN, FORMER PRIME MINISTER RASHID KARAMI AND THE PLO HAVE ALL CRITICIZED UNRWA'S DECISION.

6. DEMONSTRATION BROKEN UP.

EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE OF MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION STAGED A DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE NATIONAL BANK OF LEBANON IN WEST BEIRUT ON MAY 3 TO PROTEST A FOUR-MONTH DELAY IN PAYMENT OF THEIR SALARIES. SOLDIERS OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE FIRED RIFLES IN THE AIR TO BREAK UP THE DEMONSTRATION.

7. STILL NO CABINET.

PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS HAS NOT YET FORMED A NEW CABINET AS CAMILLE CHAMOUN CONTINUES TO INSIST THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT BE DRAWN ENTIRELY FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. ASKED BY REPORTERS ON
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MAY 4 IF THIS POSITION WAS AIMED AT KEEPING PROGRESSIVE PARTIES OUT OF THE CABINET, CHAMOUN REPLIED, "WE ARE ABIDING BY THE TRADITIONS OF OUR PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND GIVING PARLIAMENT ITS DUE." PRIVATELY, CHAMOUN HAS ALSO SAID THAT HE OBJECTS TO INSTALLING "FRIENDS OF SYRIA" IN THE CABINET--PRINCIPALLY ASIM QANSUH, BUT ALSO KAMAL SHATILA, TALAL MERHABI, TONY FRANJIYAH AND MAGID HAMMADE (SHIA FROM BAALBEK, SON OF FORMER HOUSE SPEAKER SABRI HAMMADE). DORY CHAMOUN TOLD EMBOFFS MAY 4 HE DID NOT EXPECT NEW CABINET FOR TWO MORE WEEKS AND THAT NLP WAS NOT INVOLVED IN CURRENT CONSULTATIONS.
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